I believe the Prime Minister's Gaza disengagement plan is a bold step. It is a historic step.

The success of his plan, however, will ultimately depend on the Palestinians' ability to stop terrorist acts, to strengthen democratic institutions, to provide security and to deliver tangible benefits to the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people have great expectations. It will be up to their government to deliver tangible benefits to open their world to something that is concrete but more importantly, to hope for the future.

We also met with former Cabinet member Natan Sharansky; Knesset speaker Reuven Rivlin, and foreign affairs and defense committee chairman Yuval Steinitz. All three of these individuals were opposed to the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. They are all gravely concerned about the militarization of the Sinai and weapons smuggling from the south up into Gaza. It was important to hear their views on these critical matters. I share their concern.

The withdrawal plan is understandably controversial and difficult for many families living in the Gaza Strip. I also believe withdrawal is a crucial step toward securing a lasting peace in that part of the world.

Our discussion confirmed my belief that the withdrawal must be coordinated with the Palestinian Authority so that the Palestinian Authority can prevent attacks against Israel and make tangible progress toward the roadmap.

Right now, there is an opening for huge progress. Both sides have the opportunity to build the trust that will be necessary for negotiations on what we all know will be the most controversial issues. Both sides have to fulfill their obligations.

To begin, Palestinians must dismantle the terrorist groups and stop all terrorist attacks against Israel. For the Israelis, it is critical to halt settlement activity and expansion. Much more will need to be done as we move along the roadmap.

In our conversation with Prime Minister Sharon, we also discussed our mutual concern about Iran's nuclear ambitions. We agree that a nuclear-armed Iran poses a threat to Israel, the region, to Europe, and to the United States. In my view, the United States must support the work of our European allies to end diplomatically Iran's nuclear ambitions. Failing that, we must take the issue directly to the United Nations Security Council for action.

A final meeting was with Finance Minister and former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He is working hard to ease the tax burden in order to stimulate his country's economy. He has made remarkable progress. His plan is gaining success. The Israeli economy right now is growing. The economic output, in fact, is growing at a robust annual rate of 4 percent. If he is able to make further reforms, I believe we can expect continued and possibly even better growth in the future.

As a physician, at most of these stops I take a few hours off to go to a hospital or a clinic where I have a little picture or window of the realities of what is going on in the country. I meet with doctors, nurses, and patients and ask them questions very directly. I went to the Hadassah Hospital, where I had not been, in Jerusalem. It is a large tertiary care hospital supported by a number of individuals in the United States. We toured the trauma unit, unique anywhere in the world in that it has seen more suicide attack victims than any trauma unit. In fact, they were telling me that there have been 32 suicide attacks in the last 3 years. Each of these suicide attacks—really, never thought about a decade ago there at the hospital—involved on average about 80 injured people; each one, on average, killing about 10 individuals. From an observer's standpoint, it points to the reality of what has gone on in that part of the world over the last 4 years.

We also talked a lot about the potential for biological attack as well as chemical attack and their preparedness from the hospital facility standpoint.

All in all, my trip to Jerusalem confirmed my confidence in the strength of our very special relationship with Israel and the need for continued American support for this vital friend and ally. Israel stands for what America stands for. Ultimately, it is up to the Israelis and the Palestinians to meet face to face and make the difficult decisions that will lead to peace.

My meetings with Israel's leaders reinforce my belief they are willing to take the difficult steps. I will continue to do what I can to support them in their efforts.

In closing, tomorrow I will speak very briefly on my trip to the West Bank. I do believe peace can be achieved. I look forward to sharing with my colleagues some of the observations and the lessons I have learned in my interactions with the people in the Middle East.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee, and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Utah is recognized.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, yesterday marked the fourth anniversary of President Bush's first judicial nominations, a group of 11 highly qualified men and women nominated to the U.S. courts of appeals.

As I said in the East Room at the White House on May 9, 2001: I hope the Senate will at least treat these nominees fairly. Many of our Democratic colleagues instead chose to follow their minority leader's order issued days after President Bush took office, to use ''whatever means necessary'' to defeat judicial nominees the minority does not like.

While the previous 3 Presidents saw their first 11 appeals court nominees confirmed in an average of just 81 days, today, 1,461 days later, 3 of those original nominees have not even received a vote, let alone been confirmed. Three have withdrawn.

In 2003, the minority opened a new front in the confirmation conflict by using filibusters to defeat majority-supported judicial nominees. This morning I will briefly address the top 10 most ridiculous judicial filibuster defenses. Time permits only brief treatment, but it was difficult to limit the list to 10.

No. 10 is the claim that these filibusters are part of Senate tradition. Calling something a filibuster, even if you repeat it over and over, does not make it so. These filibusters block confirmation of majority-supported judicial nominations by defeating votes to invoke cloture or end debate. Either these filibusters happened before or they did not.

Let me take the evidence offered by filibuster proponents at face value. Let me refer to these two charts. These two charts list some representative examples of what Democrats repeatedly claim is filibuster precedence. The Senate confirmed each of these nominations. As ridiculous as it sounds, filibuster proponents claim, with a straight face, by the way, that confirming these past nominations justifies refusing to confirm nominations today.

Some examples are more ridiculous than others. Stephen Breyer is on the Democrats' list of filibusters, suggesting that the Senate treated his nomination the way Democrats are treating President Bush's nominations today. The two situations could not be more different. Even though President Carter nominated now-Justice Breyer but then attorney Breyer, law professor Breyer, in November 1980, after losing his bid for reelection—that is when he nominated him—and after Democrats lost control of the Senate, we voted to end debate and overwhelmingly confirmed Stephen Breyer just 26 days after his nomination. And I had a lot to do with that. The suggestion that confirming the Breyer nomination for the party losing its majority now justifies filibustering nominations for the party keeping its majority is, well, just plain ridiculous.

No. 9 on the list of the most ridiculous filibuster defenses is that they are necessary, they say, to prevent one-party rule from stacking the Federal bench. Now, if you win elections, you say the country has chosen its leadership. If you lose, you complain about one-party rule. When your party controls the White House, the President appoints judges. When the other party controls the White House, the President stacks the bench—at least that seems to be the attitude.

Our Democratic colleagues say we should be guided by how the Democratic Senate handled Franklin Roosevelt's attempt to pack the Supreme Court. It is true that FDR's legislative proposal to create new Supreme Court seats failed, and without a filibuster, I might add. But as it turned out, packing the Supreme Court required only filling the existing seats. President Roosevelt packed the Court all right, by appointing no less than eight Justices in 6 years—more than any President, except George Washington himself.

This chart is an answer to FDR's court packing without a filibuster. Now, let me just make some points. As the chart shows, during the 75th, 76th, and 77th Congresses, when President Roosevelt made those nominations, Democrats outnumbered Republicans by an average of 70 Democrats to 20 Republicans. Now, that is one-party rule. Yet the Senate confirmed those Supreme Court nominees in an average of just 13 days, one of them on the very day it was made and six of them without even a rollcall vote. That is not because filibustering judicial nominations was difficult. In fact, our cloture rule did not then apply to nominations. A single Member of that tiny, beleaguered Republican minority could have filibustered these nominations and attempted to stop President Roosevelt from packing the Supreme Court—just a single Member could have.

The most important number on this chart is the number right at the bottom: the number of filibusters against President Roosevelt's nominees—zero.

No. 8 on this list is the claim that without the filibuster the Senate would be a patsy, nothing but a rubberstamp for the President's judicial nominations. To paraphrase a great Supreme Court Justice: If simply stating this argument does not suffice to refute it, our debate about these issues has achieved terminal silliness. Being on the losing side does not make one a rubberstamp.

For all of these centuries of democratic government, have we seen only winners and rubberstamps? Was the famous tag line for ABC's Wide World of Sports ''the thrill of victory and the agony of rubberstamping''? Democrats did not start filibustering judicial nominations until the 108th Congress. Imagine the history books describing the previous 107 Senates as the great rubberstamp Senates. Did Democrats rubberstamp the Supreme Court nomination of Clarence Thomas in 1991 since they did not use the filibuster? That conflict lasting several months and concluding with that 52-to-48 confirmation vote did not look like a rubberstamp to me.

Some modify this ridiculous argument by saying this applies when one party controls both the White House and the Senate. They make the stunning observation that Senators of the President's party are likely to vote for his nominees. The assistant minority leader, Senator DURBIN, recently said, for example, that Republican Senators are nothing but ''lapdogs'' for President Bush.

Pointing at others can be dangerous because you have a few fingers pointing back at yourself. Counting both unanimous consent or rollcall votes, more than 37,500 votes were cast here on the Senate floor on President Clinton's judicial nominations. Only 11 of them, just a teeny, tiny, three one-hundredths of 1 percent, were ''no'' votes from Democrats—only 11 of 37,500. Were they just rubberstamping lapdogs in supporting President Clinton?

The Constitution assigns the same roles to the President and the Senate no matter which party the American people put in charge of which end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

In the 1960s, the Democrats were in charge, yet Minority Leader Everett Dirksen refused to filibuster judicial nominees of Presidents Kennedy or Johnson. Was he just a rubberstamp?

In the 1970s, the Democrats were in charge, yet Minority Leader Howard Baker refused to filibuster President Carter's judicial nominees. Was he just a rubberstamp?

In the 1980s, the Republicans were in charge, yet Minority Leader Robert Byrd did not filibuster President Reagan's judicial nominees. Was he just a rubberstamp?

And a decade ago, the Democrats were again in charge, yet Minority Leader Bob Dole refused to filibuster President Clinton's judicial nominees. Was he a rubberstamp?

To avoid being a rubberstamp, one need only fight the good fight, win or lose.

No. 7 on the list of most ridiculous judicial filibuster defenses is that these filibusters are necessary to preserve our system of checks and balances. That is an argument we have heard from the other side.

Mr. President, any civics textbook explains that what we call ''checks and balances'' regulates the relationship between the branches of Government. The Senate's role of advice and consent checks the President's power to appoint judges, and we exercise that check when we vote on his judicial nominations.

The filibuster is about the relationship between the majority and minority in the Senate, not about the relationship between the Senate and the President. It actually interferes with being a check on the President's power by preventing the Senate from exercising its role of advice and consent at all.

Former Majority Leader Mike Mansfield once explained that by filibustering judicial nominations, individual Senators presume what he called ''great personal privilege at the expense of the responsibilities of the Senate as a whole, and at the expense of the constitutional structure of the federal government.''

In September 1999, the Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. KENNEDY, expressed the same view when he said:

> It is true that some Senators have voiced concerns about these nominations. But that should not prevent a roll call vote which gives every Senator the opportunity to vote ''yes'' or ''no.''

Those were the words of our colleague from Massachusetts, Senator KENNEDY: Give every Senator the opportunity to vote yes or no.

That was then; this is now.

In case anyone needs further clarification on this point, I ask unanimous consent that the definition of ''checks and balances'' from two sources, ''congressforkids.net'' and ''socialstudieshelp.com,'' be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

> Definition of checks and balances from www.congressforkids.org.
>
> ''By creating three branches of government, the delegates built a 'check and balance' system into the Constitution.''
>
> Definition of checks and balances from www.socialstudieshelp.com.
>
> ''In this system the government was to be divided into three branches of government, each branch having particular powers. Not only does each branch of the government have particular powers, each branch has certain powers of the other branches.''

Mr. HATCH. No. 6 on the list is that these filibusters are necessary to prevent appointment of extremists.

What our Democratic colleagues call ''extreme'' the American Bar Association calls ''qualified.'' In fact, all three of the appeals court nominees chosen 4 years ago who have been denied confirmation received the ABA's highest ''well qualified'' rating. Now, that was the gold standard under the Democrats when Clinton was President. The same Democrats who once called the ABA rating the gold standard for evaluating judicial nominees now disregard it and call these people extreme.

Did 76 percent of Californians vote to keep an extremist on their supreme court when they voted to retain Justice Janice Rogers Brown, an African-American woman, a sharecroppers' daughter, who fought her way all the way up to the Supreme Court of California?

Did 84 percent of all Texans and every major newspaper in the State support an extremist when they re-elected Justice Priscilla Owen to the Texas Supreme Court—84 percent?

The Associated Press reported last Friday that the minority leader reserves the right to filibuster what he

calls ''extreme'' Supreme Court nominees. Now, that is quite an escape hatch, if you will, since the minority already defines any nominee it does not like as ''extreme.'' This is simply a repackaged status quo masquerading as reform.

If Senators want to dismiss as an extremist any judicial nominee who does not think exactly as they do, that certainly is their right. That is, however, a reason for voting against a confirmation, not for refusing to vote at all. As our former colleague, Tom Daschle, said:

I find it simply baffling that a Senator would vote against even voting on a judicial nominee.

No. 5 on this list of most ridiculous judicial filibuster defenses is the claim that these filibusters are about free speech and debate. If Senators cannot filibuster judicial nominations, some say, the Senate will cease to exist, and we will be literally unable to represent our constituents.

The same men who founded this Republic designed this Senate without the ability to filibuster anything at all. A simple majority could proceed to vote on something after sufficient debate. Among those first Senators were Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut, who later served on the Supreme Court, as well as Charles Carroll of Maryland and Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, who had signed the Declaration of Independence. When they ran for office, did they know that they would be unable to represent their States because they would be unable to filibuster?

These filibusters are about defeating judicial nominations, not debating them. The minority rejects every proposal for debating and voting on nominations it targets for defeat.

In April 2003, my colleague from Utah, Senator BENNETT, asked him, the minority leader, how many hours Democrats would need to debate a particular nomination. Now, just take a look at chart 4. His response spoke volumes:

[T]here is not a number [of hours] in the universe that would be sufficient.

Let me just refer to chart 5.

Later that year, he said:

We would not agree to a time agreement . . . of any duration.

Let me go to chart 6. Just 2 weeks ago, the minority leader summed up what really has been the Democrats' position all along:

This has never been about the length of the debate.

He is right about that. This has always been about defeating nominations, not debating them. If our Democratic colleagues want to debate, then let us debate. The majority leader said we will give 100 hours for each of these nominees. Let's debate them. Let us do what Democrats once said was the purpose of debating judicial nominations. As my colleague from California, Senator BOXER, put it in January 1998:

[L]et these names come up, let us have debate, let us vote.

No. 4 on the list is that returning to Senate tradition regarding floor votes on judicial nominations would amount to breaking the rules to change the rules. As any consultant worth even a little salt will tell you, that is a catchy little phrase. The problem is that neither of its catchy little parts is true.

The constitutional option, which would change judicial confirmation procedure through the Senate voting to affirm a parliamentary ruling, would neither break nor change Senate rules. While the constitutional option has not been used to break our rules, it has been used to break filibusters.

On January 4, 1995, the Senator from West Virginia, the distinguished Senator, Mr. BYRD, described how, in 1977, when he was majority leader, he used this procedure to break a filibuster on a natural gas bill. Now, I have genuine affection and great respect for the Senator from West Virginia, and he knows that. But let me just refer to chart 7. Since I would not want to describe his repeated use of the constitutional option in a pejorative way, let me use his own words. Here is what he said back in 1995, the distinguished Senator from West Virginia:

I have seen filibusters. I have helped to break them. There are few Senators in this body who were here [in 1977] when I broke the filibuster on the natural gas bill. . . . I asked Mr. Mondale, the Vice President, to go please sit in the chair; I wanted to make some points of order and create some new precedents that would break these filibusters. And the filibuster was broken—back, neck, legs, and arms. . . . So I know something about filibusters. I helped to set a great many of the precedents that are on the books here.

Well, he certainly did. I was here. And using the constitutional option today to return to Senate tradition regarding judicial nominations would simply use the precedents the distinguished Senator from West Virginia put on the books.

No. 3 on the list of most ridiculous judicial filibuster defenses is that the constitutional option is unprecedented, or should we call it the Byrd option. In 1977, 1979, and 1987, the then majority leader, Senator BYRD, secured a favorable parliamentary ruling through a point of order and a majority of Senators voted to affirm it. He did this even when the result he sought was inconsistent with the text of our written rules.

In 1980, he used a version of the same procedure to limit nomination-related filibusters. Majority Leader BYRD made a motion for the Senate to vote to go into executive session and proceed to consider a specific nomination. At the time, the first step was not debatable but the second step was debatable. A majority of Senators voted to overturn a parliamentary ruling disallowing the procedural change Majority Leader BYRD wanted.

Let me refer to chart 8. Seven of these Senators serve with us today, and their names appear on this chart. They can explain for themselves how voting against restricting nomination-related filibusters today is consistent with voting to restrict them in 1980. As you can see, they are illustrious colleagues.

No. 2 on the list is that preventing judicial filibusters will doom legislative filibusters. As you know, there are two calendars in the Senate. One is the legislative calendar. I would fight to my death to keep the filibuster alive on the legislative calendar to protect the minority. But then there is the executive calendar, which is partly the President's in the sense that he has the power of appointment and nomination and sends these people up here and expects advice and consent from the Senate. Advice we give. Consent we have not given in the case of these nominees who have been filibustered, or so-called filibustered.

No. 2 on the list is that preventing judicial filibusters, they claim, will doom legislative filibusters. That's pure bunk. Our own Senate history shows how ridiculous this argument really is. Filibusters became possible by dropping the rule allowing a simple majority to proceed to a vote. The legislative filibuster developed, the judicial filibuster did not. What we must today limit by rule or ruling we once limited by principle or self-restraint—for 214 years, that is. The filibuster is an inappropriate obstacle to the President's judicial appointment power but an appropriate tool for exercising our own legislative power. I cannot fathom how returning to our tradition regarding judicial nominations will somehow threaten our tradition regarding legislation. The only threat to the legislative filibuster and the only votes to abolish have come from the other side of the aisle. In 1995, 19 Senators, all Democrats, voted against tabling an amendment to our cloture rule that would prohibit all filibusters of legislation as well as nominations. As this chart shows, nine of those Senators still serve with us and their names are right here on this chart.

I voted then against the Democrats' proposal to eliminate the legislative filibuster, and I oppose eliminating it today. The majority leader, Senator FRIST, also voted against the Democrats' proposal to eliminate the legislative filibuster. In fact, that was his first vote as a new Member of this body. I joined him in recommitting ourselves to protecting the legislative filibuster. I urge my friends on the other side, the Democrats, to follow the example of our colleague from California, Senator BOXER, who recently said that she has changed her position, that she no longer wants to eliminate the legislative filibuster.

In 1995, USA Today condemned the filibuster as ''a pedestrian tool of partisans and gridlock meisters.''

The New York Times said the filibuster is ''the tool of the sore loser.'' I hope these papers will reconsider their position and support the legislative filibuster.

The No. 1 most ridiculous judicial filibuster defense is that those wanting

to filibuster Republican nominees today opposed filibustering Democratic nominees only a few years ago. In a letter dated February 4, 1998, for example, the leftwing urged confirmation of Margaret Morrow to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. They urged us to ''bring the nomination to the Senate, ensure that it received prompt, full and fair consideration, and that a final vote on her nomination is scheduled as soon as possible.'' Groups signing this letter included the Alliance for Justice, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and People for the American Way. As we all know, these leftwing groups today lead the grassroots campaign behind these filibusters that would deny this same treatment to President Bush's nominees. Their position has changed as the party controlling the White House has changed.

Let me make it easy for the ''hypocrite patrol'' to check out my position on the Morrow nomination. In the February 11, 1998, CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, on page S640, three pages before that letter from the leftwing groups appears, I opened the debate on the Morrow nomination by strongly urging my fellow Senators to support it. We did, and she is, today, a sitting Federal judge, as I believe she should be. The same Democrats who today call for filibusters called for up-or-down votes when a Democrat was in the White House.

Let me refer to chart 10 here. I will just give some illustrations. In 1999, my dear friend from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, a person I have great love and respect for, a Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said of the Senate:

It is our job to confirm these judges. If we don't like them, we can vote against them.

She said:

A nominee is entitled to a vote. Vote them up, vote them down.

Let me go to chart 11. Another committee member, Senator SCHUMER, properly said in March 2000:

The President nominates and we are charged with voting on the nominees.

He was right.

Let me refer to chart 12. I have already quoted the Senator from California, Senator BOXER once, but in 2000 she said that filibustering judicial nominees:

. . . would be such a twisting of what cloture really means in these cases. It has never been done before for a judge, as far as we know—ever.

I appreciate what another member of the Judiciary Committee, Senator KOHL, said in 1997:

Let's breathe life back into the confirmation process. Let's vote on the nominees who have already been approved by the Judiciary Committee.

Well, let me go to chart 14. The Senator from Iowa, Senator HARKIN, who fought so strongly against the legislative filibuster in 1995, said, 5 years later, about the judicial filibuster:

If they want to vote against them, let them vote against them. But at least have a vote.

The same view comes from three former Judiciary Committee chairmen, members of the Democratic leadership. Let me refer to chart No. 15. A former committee chairman, Senator BIDEN, said in 1977 that every judicial nominee is entitled:

To have a shot to be heard on the floor and have a vote on the floor.

Former chairman, Senator EDWARD KENNEDY, said in 1998:

If Senators don't like them, vote against them. But give them a vote.

And my immediate predecessor as chairman, Senator LEAHY, said a year later, judicial nominees are:

entitled to a vote, aye or nay.

Now, the assistant minority leader, Senator DURBIN, had urged the same thing in September 1998:

Vote the person up or down.

Vote the person up or down.

Finally, Mr. President, the minority leader, Senator REID, expressed in March 2000 the standard that I hope we can reestablish:

Once they get out of committee, bring them down here and vote up or down on them.

The majority leader, Senator FRIST, recently proposed a plan to accomplish precisely this result. But the minority leader dismissed it as—I want to quote this accurately now—

A big fat wet kiss to the far right.

I never thought voting on judicial nominations was a far-right thing to do.

These statements speak for themselves. Do you see a pattern here? The message at one time seems to be let us debate and let us vote. That should be the standard, no matter which party controls the White House or the Senate.

Mr. President, as I close, let me summarize these 10 top most ridiculous judicial filibusters in this way. Blocking confirmation of majority-supported judicial nominations by defeating cloture votes is unprecedented. In the words of the current Judiciary Committee chairman, Senator SPECTER:

What Democrats are doing here is really seeking a constitutional revolution.

We must turn back that revolution. No matter which party controls the White House or Senate, we should return to our tradition of giving judicial nominations reaching the Senate floor an up-or-down vote. Full, fair, and vigorous debate is one of the hallmarks of this body, and it should drive how we evaluate a President's judicial nominations.

Honoring the Constitution's separation of power, however, requires that our check on the President's appointment power not highjack that power altogether. This means debate must be a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Senators are free to vote against the nominees they feel extreme, but they should not be free to prevent other Senators from expressing a contrary view or advising and consenting. In this body, we govern ourselves with parliamentary rulings as well as by unwritten rules. The procedure of a majority of Senators voting to sustain a parliamentary ruling has been used repeatedly to change Senate procedure without changing Senate rules, even to limit nomination-related filibusters.

I have tried to deal with the substance of our filibuster proponents' arguments, albeit with some humor and maybe a touch of sarcasm. A few days ago, as the Salt Lake Tribune reported, the minority leader was in my State:

. . . stopping just short of calling Utah Senator ORRIN HATCH a hypocrite.

That is at least how the newspaper described it. That is not what I consider to be a substantive argument. Perhaps those who dismiss their opponents as liars, losers, or lap dogs have nothing else to offer in this debate. Yet debate we must, and then we must vote.

Mr. President, how much remaining time do I have?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. HATCH. Let me just make this point. We confirmed, in 6 years of Republican control of the Senate, 377 judges for President Clinton. That was five less than the all-time confirmation champion Ronald Reagan. All of these people who are up have well-qualified ratings from the ABA, all had a bipartisan majority to support them. What is wrong with giving them an up-or-down vote and retaining 214 years of Senate tradition? What is wrong with that? I think it is wrong to try and blow up that tradition the way it is being done.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will the Chair advise as to how much time remains on this side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. One-half hour remains on the Senator's side.

RULES OF THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As the Senate convenes this week, we stand on the edge of dramatic change. Change is usually a good thing, but the change that the other side is trying to invoke is not a good thing. We all know it. Most Americans know it. Most Democrats know it. Most Republicans